

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. BARTLETT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BARTLETT addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

CONGRATULATIONS TO J. KIRK SULLIVAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend a good friend and an Idahoan who has spent many untold hours working for the betterment of his community, his business, our great State of Idaho and the country.

J. Kirk Sullivan has been a leader in Idaho's business community for many years, and now he is preparing to retire. It is important to note how his achievements and interests have made a difference for so many people, not only in Idaho but throughout the country. Although Kirk was not born in Idaho, and we are going to be willing to forgive him for that, much of his career has been spent working in Idaho. He will retire as a vice president of Boise Cascade Corporation.

He has been a leader in the pulp and paper industry and spent countless hours working with government officials to ensure that business operates in the best manner possible. Most recently he led a team to negotiate the resolution to a very difficult environmental issue, a proposal called the cluster rule. The original proposal would have shut down dozens of paper mills and cost hundreds of jobs.

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The new proposal adopted with Kirk's leadership provided continued improvement in the industry's environmental performance and saved those critical jobs upon which families across this country rely.

It is this kind of effort by Kirk Sullivan finding common sense solutions that benefit both the environment as well as the economy and the jobs that our families depend on that has made him such an important leader in Idaho.

He has been honored for his service for Idaho's business and selected by the University of Idaho for various awards, including the Honorary Doctor of Science and a Presidential citation.

His community involvement is varied and reaches from the Children's Home Society of Idaho to the board of directors for the Boise Master Chorale Board, to the Idaho Congressional Awards Program.

I might note that I just came here from the Washington, D.C. National Congressional Awards Program in which the Idaho program which Kirk Sullivan so strongly supports was recognized as the strongest State program for the congressional awards system in America.

We just awarded the Gold Metal of Honor to six of Idaho's young, bright people who have come up through the ranks because of the leadership of people like Kirk Sullivan helping to make a difference for our youth. Kirk Sullivan has always sought out the best in his community and has found ways to highlight it.

I am pleased now to congratulate Kirk Sullivan for the tremendous efforts he has undertaken. We know that this is not the end of his service to Idaho and to his country, but I am pleased to count him among my many friends.

I along with many and most of the rest of Idaho, in fact, with the many friends that Kirk has in Idaho, wish him the very best in his retirement. Congratulations, Kirk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. DeLAURO addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

CAMPAIGN FINANCE INVESTIGATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DIAZ-BALART). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MICA) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor tonight as a Member of the House Committee on Government Reform and Oversight in an effort to shed some light on what we have been doing.

The Committee on Government Reform and Oversight is one of the most important committees of Congress. When I came to Congress in 1993, I selected that committee because it is really one of the most important responsibilities in Congress.

Our committee really dates back to 1808 when the Founding Fathers began to see the creation of more and more of a Federal bureaucracy and Federal agencies. They did not really trust the appropriators, and they did not trust the legislators who created programs or those who funded the programs. They set up a separate investigative panel. This goes back to 1808, and that is the genesis of the committee on which I serve, the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight.

It is an important committee in Congress because it is vital to our system. There are many other systems that are similar to the American system but not that have all the checks and balances that the Founding Fathers have put together.

One of our most important responsibilities is to conduct investigations. If you go out and talk to the general public, my colleagues and many people say, well, we are investigating too much, or there is too much cost to investigations; and that really is not the case in our system. That is part of our system and part of the process.

The current Committee on Government Reform and Oversight is also known as the Burton Committee. It has been very difficult to serve on that committee and do an effective job.

The gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON), myself, and other members of the committee are sent here in the stead of the public and the citizens to conduct their business, to look at investigating the agencies and activities at the Federal level. We have tried to take that on with a certain responsibility and fairness; and it has been, indeed, a very difficult task, even up to today.

Since February, we have been asking for a grant of immunity for four witnesses. We go first to the Department of Justice. This is in our campaign investigation of the foreign money that came into the 1996 campaigns. But we went first to the Department of Justice and requested that we could depose and have these witnesses testify and grant immunity that, back in February, we were granted.

Ever since then, Mr. Speaker, we have seen delay. We have seen one tactic to obstruct this investigation after another. Very frustrating. Back after, again, DOJ gave us permission in February and March, the first vote was to deny granting immunity by the Democrats on April 23, a second vote on May 13.

Finally, today, on the eve of the President going to China have we obtained permission and consent to get a grant of immunity to hear these witnesses to conduct the investigation.

I am concerned about the process, the delay, and obstruction to date. It is a serious matter for the Congress because they have managed now to obstruct this investigation, our responsibility under the Constitution, and what the people sent us here for until this date.

This is the last week this House will be in session before we go on recess. We come back in mid July, and we will be here for approximately 3 weeks. So the plan to obstruct, the plan to delay, the plan to subvert the very process that our Founding Fathers has put together has, indeed, succeeded; and it is unfair, because the American people have a right to know.

The very system that has been abused in this campaign finance process, the very system that set up this investigation and review and this cleansing that takes place through a committee like the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight has, in fact, been obstructed in its responsibility.

Then we have charges that we have been too broad in our responsibilities, in our investigation. We did not create Filegate. We had to investigate it. We did not create Travelgate. We had to investigate it. We did not create this fiasco with campaign financing. We have been charged to investigate it.

We have never in the history of this republic that I am aware of had seven independent counsels. The list goes on